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Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project

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Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Acknowledgements

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**Dunham Tavern Museum
Governance Project, December 2015
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Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Introduction

Introduction

The Center for Nonprofit Policy & Practice (CNP&P) was formally engaged by board leaders of the Dunham Tavern Museum in 2014 to assist the organization with forming and performing the work to strengthen board governance. Gradually, a project work plan was created to conduct “small p” planning (not traditional strategic planning) to advance the interests of the organization.

The mutually agreed upon work products facilitated by the CNP&P include the following elements:

- Board development, training, and priorities planning of strategic issues;
- Assist board members develop a board governance committee;
- Create a mutually agreeable work plan for the committee;
- Provide staffing and support for the board governance committee, involving such matters as:
 1. Prepare meeting agendas
 2. Note-taking at meetings with written minutes
 3. Coordinating communications of board members
 4. Research as required
- Review and revise official Dunham Tavern bylaws;
- Other tasks as mutually agreed upon.

The culmination of this project resulted in revised organizational bylaws, procedures for best practices for board governance, committee structures and organizational charts, board positions and descriptions, organizational priorities, nominations processes, and strategic goal setting.

The commitment of the Dunham Tavern Board is reflected in the activities of the governance committee. This committee was comprised of the senior board members. The governance committee met for up to three hours per session on the following dates, 2015: 4/12, 4/21, 5/12, 5/20, 5/27, 6/2, 6/8, 6/24, 7/9, 7/21, 7/28, 8/11, 8/26, 9/2, 9/17, 10/7, 10/22, 12/9 (*See Table II: Agenda Themes*).

Deliverables for this have project included:

- This written final report;
- Communications and feedback via regular attendance at meeting, emails, and other forms of correspondence;
- Recommendations based on the planning process;
- Presentations to the board leadership and others as required;
- Revised and updated organizational Bylaws;
- Creation of Dunham Tavern governance materials that include Board of Trustees position descriptions, organization flow charts, organizational priorities, nominations processes, and a flowchart for the governance project process and achievement benchmarks;
- Supporting materials for board development and training which include scholarly articles and best practice readings and exercises.

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Background

Amazingly, Dunham Tavern stood through Euclid Avenue's rise and fall. Stagecoach stops to car dealerships, Millionaire's Row to urban renewal . . . yet Dunham Tavern Museum has remained.

--Dunham Tavern Website, December 2015

Organization Background

Once a stagecoach stop on the Buffalo-Cleveland-Detroit post road, today Dunham Tavern Museum is the oldest building still standing on its original site in the city of Cleveland. The 1824 home of Rufus and Jane Pratt Dunham in Midtown Cleveland is now a designated Cleveland Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In stark contrast to the cityscape that surrounds it, the museum and its gardens offer a glimpse of history and insight into the lifestyles of early Ohio settlers and travelers.

Organization Mission

It is the mission of Dunham Tavern to preserve, develop and share historic Dunham Tavern Museum and its campus as an educational and cultural resource.

Organization Vision

We aspire for Dunham Tavern as an institution to provide an urban green space in Midtown Cleveland, and to return the Tavern to its roots and serve as a place for history, education, nature, and community in urban life.

Notable Organizational Features

Education

Dunham Tavern Museum offers a variety of educational programs for all ages of students and scouts. Currently, a typical program involves a museum tour with a brief history of the Dunham family and explanation of life in the early 1800s, along with an educational activity held in the Dunham Barn. All tours are led by trained docents to provide you with the most accurate and positive learning experience.

GreenSpace

Dunham Tavern totes the largest public green space in Midtown. A great deal of work and investment has been done to acquire and begin to restore the open prairie to the west of the beloved tavern, where a vacant concrete industrial building once stood. This green space has the potential to be a transformative asset for Dunham and for the Midtown neighborhood, and aspires to be a lasting legacy of nature, history, wellness, and community.

Gardens

Dunham Tavern Gardens and Heritage Trail adds another dimension to the museum. Surrounded by industrial and commercial development, Dunham Tavern is a reminder of the Western Reserve as it once was. The 900 foot path features depictions of early settler life along with a stagecoach, log cabin, and community gardens featuring 1800s landscaping and local vegetables.

Barn

The original Dunham Barn was built in the 1840s with hand-hewn timbers, cut nails, and simple stone-on-ground foundations. With a few variations, like gable-entry doors, features of the barn were representative of traditional English construction. While the original barn burnt down in 1963, a replica barn was built to replace it in 2000. Whenever possible, original construction methods were used. The barn now serves as a rental and education center for nonprofit organizations, corporations, school groups, scouts, and individuals.

Core Values drawn from this project:

The board governance committee, through regular meetings, has ascertained a series of core values for the organization. We make envisage a thriving Dunham Tavern future through these values:

- Promote Dunham Tavern as an educational resource which enriches historical appreciation among youth and the community at large
- Preserve historic Dunham Tavern and its campus as a cultural resource
- Utilize the Dunham Tavern campus as a community gathering place, through its capacity as a venue for recreational social events and educational programs
- Champion Dunham Tavern as an invaluable component to the Midtown community among others

Goals and Strategies drawn from this project:

As established through regular board governance committee meetings, as well as the “Sequential Priorities for Immediate Development” chart, we realize our mission by working continuously to strengthen the Dunham Tavern Museum by:

- Developing an active, engaged, and diverse Board
- Embracing inclusiveness and respect for differences of opinion
- Formulating a strategic funding plan for sustainability
- Refining and setting clear, realistic priorities that will result in positive outcomes
- Reforming the Dunham Tavern mission and bylaws
- Creating programs which will advance the mission while generating sustainable revenue
- Utilizing funds to hire an Executive Director, to enable the Board of Trustees to transition from a working board to a governing board

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Narrative

The Dunham Tavern Museum and property has existed as an independent organization for decades. Through this time, its constituent interests have focused on the preservation of the Dunham property and buildings, antiques collections and early and primary school-aged education program milieu, relying heavily upon the volunteer labor of board members and a dedicated coterie of individuals contributing to the enterprise through annual membership fees.

In the early 2010s, leaders of the Dunham Tavern Museum board, who included the President and Past President, legal counsel, committee chairpersons from nominating, fund development, programs and grounds committees and other long-time volunteers determined that recent construction, economic development, and the desire by public and private actors to restore the vigor of the Midtown region of Cleveland as a place to live and work provided them with important opportunities for growth and the advancement of their organization. Land acquisition by Dunham Tavern was a part of this process.

Taking advantage of the momentum building in the Midtown region requires the organization to move away from the model of a “working board” in which the board, along with unpaid volunteers, assumed the traditional responsibilities of governance *and* operations.

Among the reasons to shift the organization away from dependence upon a working board model of operations and toward one in which the board serves to more singularly govern the organization, is that to achieve the strategic vision to “...serve as a place for history, education, nature, and community in urban life,” a more robust and resilient financial organization that is professionally directed and managed is necessary.

Put more succinctly, to build a more robust organization, creating a full time, permanent staff to develop projects, take action, and speak with authority on behalf of the organization on a daily basis, is the first step toward fulfillment of the promise and potential of the Dunham Tavern organization.

The board governance committee, which has comprised the working group of the plan and support materials found in this document, has established the framework for advancing the Dunham Tavern organization as described. Based upon the work, dedication, and commitment of the committee members, we recommend Dunham Tavern:

1. Seek capacity building funding from the local foundation community and other stakeholders to hire a capable executive director whose responsibilities will be to strengthen the organization programs and generation of earned and contributed revenues;
2. Devise a simplified strategic plan under established new priorities or through clarifying existing priorities;
3. Begin a process of resource development for both earned and contributed sources based on the outcomes of items 1 and 2 above.

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Findings & Commentary

Based upon the data collected during the data gathering exercises in conjunction with board governance committee meetings, and other special meetings as necessary, we observe:

1. The Dunham Tavern campus houses a unique set of assets which can and should be utilized and developed to the fullest of their potential. The venue capacities can be expanded upon in a literal, physical sense, and also as a community gathering place.

Commentary: Considerable energy and enthusiasm was expressed by members of the governance committee for the promise and potential of the organization. There is general agreement that the current operations structure works for small scale activities but would not for a more ambitious program milieu.

2. Upholding the Dunham Tavern mission and vision to nourish historical education and preservation, while exemplifying the organization as an invaluable asset to the community, are among the highest priorities of the board.

Commentary: The board has a passionate, creative, and resourceful group of members who have demonstrated dedication and commitment through a lengthy organizing and planning process. The commitment to mission and success in acting upon the recommendations of the governance plan will provide clear indication that the organization is grant-ready and grant-worthy by third parties. Another indicator of readiness for Dunham Tavern to advance toward the opportunities presented in Midtown are the further contributions of time, talent and treasure to the organization.

3. Board members are motivated to fulfill their roles as mission stewards of the Dunham Tavern museum.

Commentary: The governance planning process required 19 separated meetings over 18 months along with intermittent assignments and follow-up by board committee members. The process also included the integration of new ideas upon their conception in the ordinary practices of the organization. Both the full board and the organization are credited with improved interpersonal relationships, problem solving, and the willingness to address the problems that arise, collectively in the spirit of an increasingly cohesive team.

4. The organization is in a period of transition and that the board role is changing from that of a working board to that of a more traditional governing board.

Commentary: None necessary. Self-evident.

5. The board must increase in size, diversity, and as an assemblage of talents to accomplish the priorities established by the board governance committee.

Commentary: An outcome of the governance project has been to “right-size” the board as a whole to meet the challenges of the tasks ahead. This includes the recruitment of board members with designated skill sets, expertise, and resources to perform the work required of a governing

board whose members set the strategic direction, create resources for the organization, remove barriers to achievement of organizational goals, and lead by example.

6. The organization must generate a strategic fund advancement plan to sustain its operations and secure revenue to pay a salaried employee.

Commentary: To build a more robust organization, creating a full time, permanent staff to develop projects, take action, and speak with authority on behalf of the organization on a daily basis, is the first step toward fulfillment of the promise and potential of the Dunham Tavern organization.

7. Recognition by the collective of the Board of Trustees that to professionalize the management of the organization will require regular communication between one another, and respect of one another's differing opinions.

Commentary: Board development using education, team building activities, and regular and clear communications is essential, moving forward. The board leadership must devise rituals that support Dunham Tavern values, which have been readily discussed and practiced during the governance project committee and work group.

8. The Board recognizes the need to adhere to the structured board governing procedures, as emphasized in the adopted governing documents, which outline the clarity of roles and responsibilities of trustees, officers, members, and committee chairs.

Commentary: See number 7 above.

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Governance Committee Work Plan Goals

Governance Committee Work Plan Goals

As part of the “small p” planning, Table I below highlights the concrete work plan goals that the governance committee has articulated.

Table I

Category-Cluster of Governance Committee Work Plan Goals	
Goal	Summary of Purpose
I. Develop the Dunham Tavern Mission and adopt revised Code of Regulations	<i>To advance Dunham Tavern by adjusting internal purpose and mission; and to strengthen internal governance through revised Bylaws.</i>
II. Develop Board governance procedures and strategies for recruitment	<i>To develop and recruit a passionate, engaged, and diverse Board which attracts a wide breadth of skills, networking capacities, and an increased wealth of knowledge.</i>
III. Establish Sequential Priorities for Immediate Development	<i>To refine the vision and goals of Dunham Tavern in order to secure successful project outcomes and to facilitate a thriving future for the organization.</i>
IV. Develop a Sustainability Fund to secure resources to hire an Executive Director	<i>To develop sustainable funding by promoting educational and cultural endeavors for youth and the Midtown community at large through creative and remunerative programs and events.</i>
V. Transition from a Working Board to a Governing Board	<i>To further the Dunham Tavern mission by increasing overall organizational efficacy through the development of a stable, structured board and staff by hiring a permanent Executive Director.</i>

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project Agenda Themes

Agenda Themes

The table below comprises the raw data produced by the board governance committee of the “small p” planning process. Table II documents the committee meeting dates and the agenda discussed at each meeting.

Table II

Meetings	Agenda Items
Session 1: April 12, 2015	Small “p” planning; Introductions; Getting started
Session 2: April 21, 2015	Nonprofit Governance: Challenges, Leadership & Management
Session 3: May 12, 2015	Flow of information & decision making; Authority of Executive Committee
Session 4: May 20, 2015	Review; Board structures; Bylaws
Session 5: May 27, 2015	Review Board Organization & duties; Information Flow Diagram
Session 6: June 2, 2015	Bylaws continued: Bureaucracy, Authority, & Hierarchies
Session 7: June 8, 2015	Bylaws continued: Expectations, Conflicts of Interest, & Meetings
Session 8: June 24, 2015	Bylaws continued: Conflicts of Interest continued; Authorities & duties continued
Session 9: July 9, 2015	Bylaws continued: Committee structures; Hierarchy of Authorities continued; Nominations & Elections
Session 10: July 21, 2015	Development of Board Slot positions; Nominations & Elections continued
Session 11: July 28, 2015	Development of Board Slot positions continued; Nominations & Elections continued
Session 12: August 11, 2015	Purpose & benefit of Organizational Members; Chart of Organizational Hierarchies
Session 13: August 26, 2015	Board Recruitment; Developing Priorities
Session 14: September 2, 2015 <i>Governance Committee Meeting</i>	Board Recruitment continued; Sequential Priorities & Iterative Prioritization
Session 15: September 17, 2015	Board Recruitment continued; Fund Advancement Plan & Sustainability Model; Organizational Charts
Session 16: October 7, 2015	Board Recruitment continued; Optimum Funding Mix
<i>Session w/Chris Ronayne</i> October 22, 2015	University Circle, Inc. involvement
Session 17: December 9, 2015	Draft of Report and Bylaws reviewed

Dunham Tavern Museum Governance Project

Table of Project Outcomes

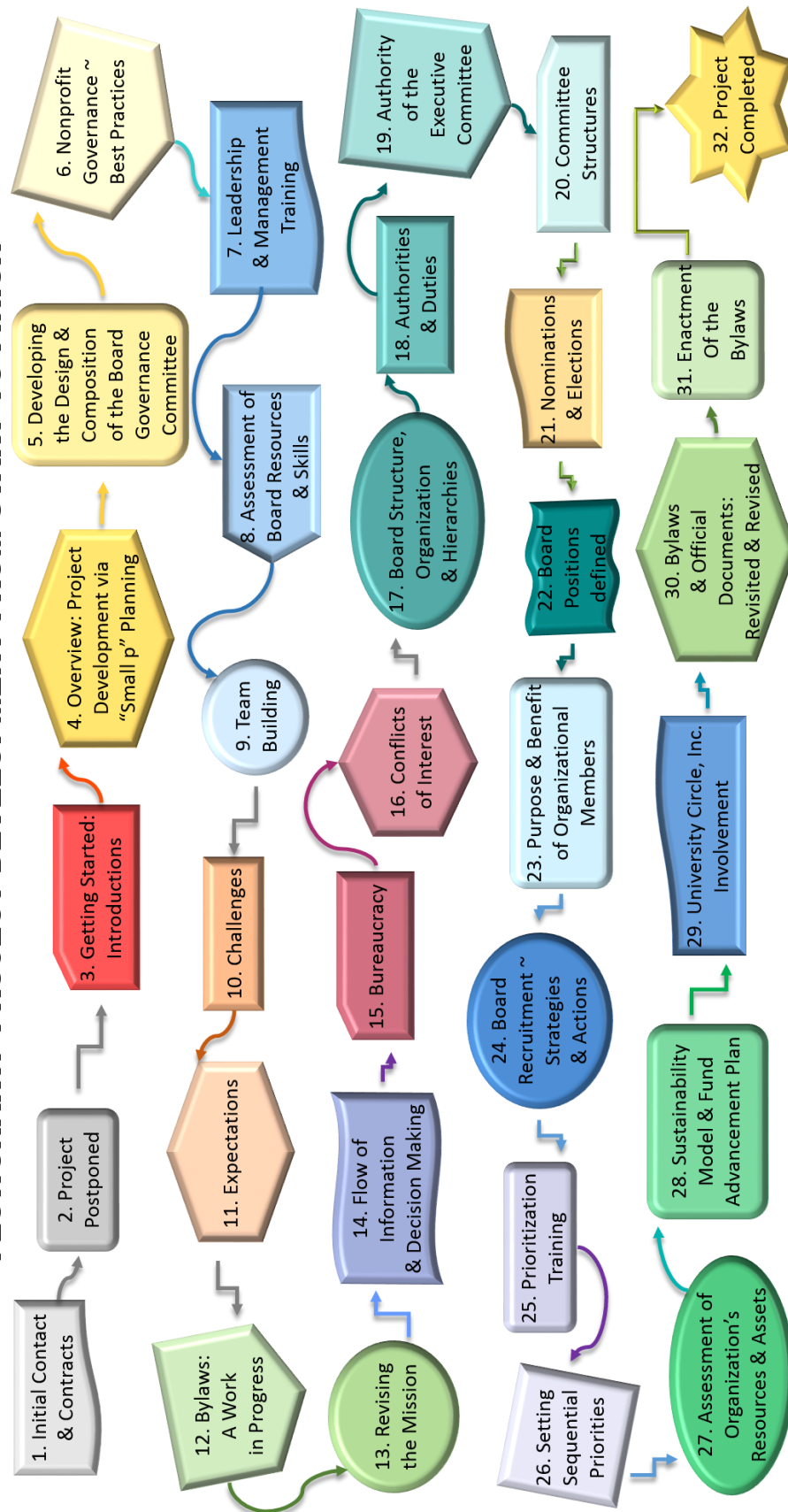
Table of Project Outcomes

Table III

Project Outcomes	
Tasks	Outcomes
I. Board Development: Training, Procedures & Recruitment	
Re-develop the mission in order to clarify purpose	Revised Mission
Revision of bylaws in order to clarify operations, legal responsibilities, and board succession procedures	Revised Code of Regulations
Develop and strengthen board governance procedures, structures, duties, and hierarchy of authorities	Board of Trustees Job Descriptions & Organizational Charts
Provide strategies for board recruitment	Recruitment Strategies
Instruct on flow-of-information tactics and decision-making skills	Training; Priorities Charts
Establish set priorities in order to refine the vision and goals of Dunham Tavern	Sequential Priorities for Immediate Development
Create a mutually agreeable work plan for the committee with proposed project outcomes	Priorities Charts; Sustainability Model for Fund Advancement
Provide Educational and Training Materials and techniques	Scholarly articles and journals
Establish community connections	University Circle, Inc. involvement
Identify purpose & benefit of Organizational Members	Understanding the importance of maintaining pool of members
II. Author & Design Official Governance Documentation	
Revised Code of Regulations	As stated
Board of Trustees Job Descriptions	As stated
Organizational Charts	As stated
Sequential Priorities for Immediate Development	As stated
The Dunham Tavern Museum Development Plan	As stated
III. Create & Participate in a Board Governance Committee	
Assist in developing the design and composition of a board governance committee	Board Governance Committee established
Provide staffing and support for the board governance committee, involving such matters as: prepare meeting agendas; note-taking at meetings with written minutes; coordinating communications of board members; and research as required.	Sequential meeting agendas, meeting notes, enhanced communications among board members
Maintain constant communications and feedback via regular attendance at meetings, emails, presentations, and other forms of correspondence as required.	Consistent participation at meetings; routine feedback and follow up; official documentation based on board's preferences
IV. Provide & Implement "small p" Strategic Planning	
Provide strategies and solutions for strategic management issues	As stated
Develop a Sustainability Model which advances educational and cultural endeavors for youth and the Midtown community at large through creative and remunerative programs and events	Sustainability Model / Fund Advancement Plan; revenue-generating program ideas
Implement the Fund Advancement Plan to secure resources to hire an Executive Director, thereby allowing the board to transition from a working board to a governing one	Sustainability Model / Fund Advancement Plan

DUNHAM TAVERN

FLOWCHART: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FROM START TO FINISH



Dunham Tavern – Erin Carek, 12/8/2015